



## redear sunfish

*Lepomis microlophus*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Family:	Perciformes
Order:	Centrarchidae

## Features

The redear sunfish is a deep slab-sided sunfish with a small mouth quite similar in appearance to bluegill and pumpkinseed. It has a rounded ear flap with a whitish border and a prominent red or orange spot in adults, hence the name redear. Its back and sides are golden or light olive green with several vertical bars that disappear in older fish. The fins are greenish without spots.

## Natural History

The redear sunfish most frequently is found in lakes that are steep-sided. It eats mostly snails and aquatic insect larvae. It spawns in spring. Males emit a "popping" sound when courting females. The female deposits an average of 20,000 eggs into a nest built by the males. The nests usually are grouped into a colony near submerged vegetation. Eggs hatch in six to 10 days. Redear were stocked into Iowa waters from Missouri in the 1960s.

## Habitats

interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

## Iowa Status

common; exotic

## Iowa Range

southern two-thirds of Iowa

## Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.